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FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6573

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

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AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, PFOR, MOPS, ECON, CB SUBJ: KHMER REPORT - JUNE 18, 1974

GENERAL

1. THE GKR PASSED ANOTHER TROUBLESOME POLITICAL HURDLE THIS WEEK WHEN PRIME MINISTER LONG BORET SUCCEEDED IN FORMING A NEW CABINET. THE NEW TEAM COMBINES SOME HOLD-OVERS WITH A FEW NEW INDEPENDENTS AND A NUMBER OF SOCIO-REPUBLICAN POLITICIANS WHO HAD OPPOSED THE PRIME MINISTER. IN RETURN FOR INCREASED REPRESENTATION ON THE POLICY-MAKING EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, REPUBLICAN MINISTERS ABANDONES THE CABINET AND THEIR CONFRONTATION WITH PARLIAMENT. THE NEW CABINET THUS SEEMS DESIGNED LESS TO INCREASE INTERNAL GOVERNMENTAL EFFICIENCY THAN TO DAMPEN EXTERNAL ANTAGONISMS WHICH HAD HERETOFORE HINDERED PROGRESS. IN INTRODUCING HIS PROGRAM AND CABINET TO THE PARLIAMENT, LONG BORET CALLED FOR A MORATORIUM ON DEBILITATING CRITICISM AND PROFITEERING AND REITERATED THE GKR'S DETERMINATION TO SEEK PEACE TALKS WITH THE KC. ON THE MILITARY FRONT, FANK MADE GOOD PROGRESS IN THE ROUTE 5-LOVEK AREA, KILLING OVER 300 ENEMY IN ONE ENGAGEMENT ALONE AND BEGINNING THE EVACUATION OF SOME 20,000 CIVILIANS FROM LOVEK. THE KC, HOWEVER, MAINTAINED THEIR PRESSURE ON LOWER ROUTE 4 AND INTERDICTED ANOTHER IMPORTANT SECTION OF ROUTE 5 NORTHEAST OF PURSAT AS WELL. CONFIDENTIAL

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POLITICAL (INTERNAL)

2. AS EXPECTED, LONG BORET CONTINUES AS PRIME MINISTER OF THE NEW, RE-SHUFFLED CABINET. ANNOUNCED JUNE 16, HIS SECOND GOVERNMENT INCLUDES EIGHT SOCIO-REPUBLICANS, SEVEN INDEPENDENTS AND TWO MILITARY. THE REPUBLICAN PARTY ENDED ITS PARTICIPATION IN THE CABINET; IN EXCHANGE, OP KIM ANG,

FORMER 1ST DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER, WILL REPORTEDLY JOIN REPUBLICAN LEADER SIRIK MATAK IN THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, WHICH REMAINS THE GKR'S HIGHEST POLICY-MAKING BODY. ANOTHER PROBABLE ADDITION TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL IS SOCIO-REPUBLICAN PARTY SECRETARY GENERAL, PAN SOTHI, WHO WAS NAMED 1ST DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF EDUCATION. HORSE TRADING CONTINUES FOR SUB-CABINET POSITIONS WHICH SHOULD ADD FROM 12 TO 20 POLITICIANS FROM VARIOUS FACTIONS TO THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS, COMMENT: SOTHI'S INCLUSION SHOULD DRAW THE TEETH OF ANTI-BORET ACTIVITIES FROM WITHIN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OWN PARTY AND EXCLUSION OF THE REPUBLICANS SHOULD DAMPEN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY CRITICISM OF THE PRIME MINISTER FRO HIS "TOLERATION" OF REPUBLICAN REFUSAL TO SUBMIT TO INTERPELLATION. IN BRINGING THE OPPOSITION INTO THE FOLD, BORET HAS SACRIFICED INTERNAL CABINET COHESION AND DYNAMISM TO OBTAIN THE REMOVAL OF EXTERNAL IMPEDIMENTS. PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE NEW CABINET'S PROGRAM WILL REVEAL WHETHER HE MADE A GOOD CHOICE.

3. PRESENTING THE PROGRAM OF HIS NEW GOVERNMENT TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ON JUNE 18, LONG BORET WARNED THAT UNDER PRESENT PERILOUS CIRCUMSTANCES, SPITEFUL, UNCONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM AND EXCESSIVE CONCERN FOR PERSONAL GAIN WILL WEAKEN THE REPUBLIC AND ULTIMATELY BRING DISASTER TO ALL KHMER. HE STRESSED THE GOVERNMENT'S DETERMINATION TO BRING ABOUT TALKS AIMED AT FINDING A FORMULA FOR UNITING AND RECONCILING ALL KHMER AND STATED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD SUPPORT ALL INITIATIVES TOWARD THIS END. AT THE SAME TIME, HE NOTED THE NEED TO BUILD UP A STRONG ARMY AND TO MAINTAIN PUBLIC ORDER. IN LATTER RESPECT HE ANNOUNCED THAT LAW ENFORCEMENT AIMS WILL BE REORGANIZED. ATTRIBUTING THE COUNTRY'S INFLATIONARY WOES TO A DROP IN CONFIDENTIAL

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INTERNAL PRODUCTION AND SERIOUS DISEQUILIBRIUM IN THE BUDGET, BORET OUTLINED PRODUCTION, IMPORT, RATIONING, PRICING AND FISCAL MEASURES THE GOVERNMENT WILL UNDERTAKE. HE NOTED THE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION TO ENTER INTO A DIALOGUE WITH STUDENTS BUT DID NOT ADDRESS THE ECONOMIC DEMANDS OF THE TEACHERS. HE REAFFIRMED THE GOVERNMENT'S STRATEGY OF SEEKING A POSTPONEMENT OF THE CAMBDOIAN CREDENTIALS ISSUE AT UNGA.

4. DESPITE MINOR/ALARMS WHICH SAW THE ARMED FORCES PUT ON ALERT JUNE 11 AND THE REOPENING OF SCHOOLS POSTPONED TO JUNE 17, THE CAPITAL HAS SLOWLY RETURNED TO NORMAL FOLLOWING THE JUNE 4 ASSASSINATIONS. THE CURFEW HAS BEEN RELAXED TO 2100 - 0500, AND SCHOOLS REOPENED ON SCHEDULE EXCEPT FOR LYCEE 18 MARS WHERE DAMAGE FOLLOWING THE

JUNE 4 EVENTS MUST FIRST BE REPAIRED. PRIMARY SCHOOLS ARE HOLDING CLASSES AS USUAL, BUT MOST LYCEE TEACHERS HAVE REPORTEDLY NOT YET RESUMED TEACHING.

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POLITICAL (EXTERNAL)

5. THE GKR DELEGATION TO THE LAW OF THE SEA CONFERENCE IN CARACAS WILL BE HEADED BY FOREIGN MINISTER KEUKY LIM WITH SAMRETH LOTH, FORMERLY GKR AMBASSADOR TO LONDON, AS HIS DEPUTY. THE DELEGATION ALSO INCLUDES FIVE LOS SPECIALISTS. COMMENT: THE SIZE AND HIGH LEVEL NATURE OF THE DELEGATION SHOW THAT THE KHMER ARE FULLY AWARE OF THE GKR'S POLITICAL STAKE IN THE CONFERENCE.

GRUNK/FUNK

6. THE OTHER SIDE CONTINUED ITS CONCENTRATED CAMPAIGN TO EXPLOIT INTERNAL DISARRAY IN GKR RANKS FOLLOWING THE JUNE 4 ASSASSINATIONS. FUNK PROPAGANDA PRAISED THE "STRUGGLE OF THE CAMBODIAN YOUTHS", ACCUSED THE GKR OF BRUTAL AND REPRESSIVE MEASURES AND URGED ALL SECTORS OF THE POPULATION TO INTENSIFY THEIR EFFORTS TO TOPPLE THE GOVERNMENT. THIS WAS COMBINED WITH GLEEFUL DESCRIPTIONS OF THE PHNOM PENH POLITICAL INFIGHTING AND PREDICTIONS OF THE IMMINENT COLLAPSE OF THE LONG BORET GOVERNMENT. ALTHOUGH THE OTHER SIDE HAS NOT HAD A CHANCE TO COMMENT ON THE NEW CABINET, ITS REACTION WAS FORESHADOWED BY COMMENTS SUCH AS "NO MATTER WHAT TRAITOR THE AMERICAN IMPERIALISTS MAY CHOOSE TOFORM ANOTHER GOVERNMENT...THE PEOPLE IN THE ENEMY'S TEMPORARILY CONTROLLED AREAS WILL CATEGORICALLY REJECT HIS CLIQUE..."

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7. SEVERAL RECENT ENEMY PROPAGANDA BROADCASTS HAVE DEVOTED CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION TO THE "SUPERIORITY OF CPNLAF TACTICS," WHICH ALLEGEDLY KEEP FANK ON THE RUN. AS FANK DEFENDS IN ONE THREATENED AREA, THE CPNLAF MOVES TO ANOTHER ANT THUS, ACCORDING TO FUNK RADIO, "THE TRAITOROUS TROOPS SAW THEMSELVES BEING DISMANTLED BY CHUNKS". SUCH BROADCASTS END WITH THE RITUAL CALLS FOR CONTINUING THE OFFENSIVE AND LIBERATING PHNOM PENH (WITHOUT HOWEVER MAKING ANY PREDICTIONS ON WHEN THE LATTER WILL COME TO PASS). COMMENT. THIS ATTEMPT TO GLORIFY TACTICAL MOBILITY APPEARS TO BE A RATIONALIZATION OF THE KC SHIFTING OF FORCES TO LESSER TARGETS AFTER ITS FAILURE TO TAKE PHNOM PENH AND PRINCIPAL PROVINCIAL ENCLAVES. END COMMENT.

8. IN ONE OF ITS MORE FLAGRANT FALSEHOODS, FUNK CLAIMED ON JUNE 13 THAT ITS TROOPS CAPTURED A "U.S. LIEUTENANT MILITARY ADVISOR" IN THE VICINITY OF KOMPONG SOM.

ECONOMIC

9. ABOUT 20,000 REFUGEES ARE BEING EVACU-ATED THROUGH THE RECENTLY ESTABLISHED BRIDGEHEAD NEAR LOVEK. THE KHMER NAVY BEGAN TRANSPORTING THE REFUGEES UP THE TONLE SAP TO KOMPONG CHHNANG JUNE 16. VOLUNTARY AGENCIES ARE PLANNING TO RECEIVE THEM AND PROVIDE ASSISTANCE.

10. ON JUNE 16, GOVERNMENT RICE STOCKS IN PHNOM PENH WERE 57,500MT OF AN 85-DAY SUPPLY AT A COMSUMPTION RATE OF 680 MT/DAY. DUE TO HEAVIER DEMAND FROM VOLUNTARY AGENCIES AND SOME ENCLAVES, THE GKR RICE COMMITTEE INCRASED THE 650 DAILY QUOTA TO 680 MT. ACTUAL DAILY DISTRIBUTION, HOWEVER, HAS AVERAGED 709 MT SO FAR THIS MONTH, BUT THE AVERAGE FOR THE MONTH SHOULD LEVEL OFF TO 680 MT

11. THE FIRST OF TWO USAID VESSELS CHARTERED FOR TRANS-PORTING ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES FROM KOMPONG SOM TO PHNOM PENH VIA THE MEKONG RIVER IS SCHEDULED TO ARRIVE IN PHNOM PENH ON JUNE 22 WITH A CARGO OF RICE, SALT, AND OTHER SUPPLIES. THE NEWLY-CREATED GKR INTERNAL TRANSPORT CONFIDENTIAL

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COMMISSION AND USAID ARE FIRMING UP PLANS TO INCREASE TRUCKING CAPABILITIES ON THE BATTAMBANG-KOMPONG CHHNANG RUN, SECURE ADEQUATE STORAGE SPACE IN KOMPONG CHHNANG, AND ORGANIZE TWO RIVER CONVOYS PER MONTH ON THE TONLE SAP IN ORDER TO MOVE THE BATTAMBANG RICE SUPLUS AND OTHER

SUPPLIES TO PHNOM PENH. THIS RICE SURPLUS IS ESTIMATED AT ABOUT 25,000 MT.

12. PRICES DURING THE WEEK ENDING JUNE 17 EXPERIENCED A GENERAL DOWNWARD TREND. THIS TREND IS RELATED PARTLY TO ONGOING EFFORTS TO INCREASE THE SUPPLY OF GOODS AND PARTLY TO SEASONAL FACTORS. ITEMS WHICH DECREASED IN PRICE MOST PROBABLY DUE TO NON-SEASONAL FACTORS WERE DOMESTIC RICE OCEAN AND DRY FISH, CHICKENS, AND DUCKS. SEASONAL FACTORS HELPED CAUSE PRICE DECREASES FOR VEGETABLES SUCH AS TOMATOES, LOCAL POTATOES, GREEN BEANS AND SALAD. LOCALLY PRODUCED NON-FOOD ITEMS GENERALLY REMAINED UNCHANGED IN PRICE. THE FREE MARKET RIATE FOR THE DOLLAR WAS 830 RIELS DURING THE PERIOD, A ONE PERCENT INCREASE OVER LAST WEEK.

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P R 181203Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6575

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

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MILITARY

13. FANK ENJOYED CONSIDERABLE SUCCESS DURING THE WEEK ALONG ROUTE 5 TO THE NORTH OF PHNOM PENH. FIFTH BRIGADE AND 7TH DIVISION FORCES ATTEMPTING TO PUSH UP ROUTE 5 WERE STRENGTHENED BY THE ADDITION OF ANOTHER BRIGADE AND ON JUNE 17 KILLED AN ESTIMATED 315 KC WHILE SUFFERING ONLY MODERATE CASUALTIES. MEANWHILE FORCES GARRISONED AT LOVEK MANAGED AGAINST MODERATE RESISTANCE TO REACH THE TONLE SAP RIVER. ONCE THE BRIDGEHEAD THERE WAS ESTABLISHED, THE EVACUATION TO KOMPONG CHHNANG OF THE SOME 20,000 CIVILIANS IN LOVEK BEGAN; SUPPORTED BY AIR AND NAVAL ASSETS, ABOUT 4,800 PERSONS WERE MOVED DURING THE PERIOD JUNE 16-18, WITH AN ESTIMATED 100 WOUNDED. THE EVACUATION IS PROCEEDING.

14. THE NEWS WAS LESS ENCOURAGING FARTHER UP ROUTE 5

NEAR PURSAT. KC IN THIS AREA OCCUPIED A 12 KILOMETER SECTION OF HIGHWAY BETWEEN BATTAMBANG AND KOMPONG CHHNANG, INTERDICTING THE FLOW OF COMMERCIAL TRAFFIC BETWEEN THE TWO CITIES. AT THE END OF THE REPORTING PERIOD, FRIENDLY OPERATIONS WERE LAUNCHED TO COUNTER THIS UNFAVORABLE DEVELOPMENT.

15. ON ROUTE 4, THE KC CONTINUED TO EXERT HEAVY PRESSURE ON THE GROUND AND BY ABF'S AGAINST THE ENCLAVE AT CONFIDENTIAL

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KOMPONG SEILA. THE ONGOING FANK OPERATION MOUNTED FROM KOMPONG SPEU WHICH IS DESIGNED TO ASSIST BELEAGUERED FRIENDLY TROOPS AT BOTH KOMPONG SEILA AND DAS KANCHOR THUS FAR HAS HAD NEGLIGIBLE IMPACT. FURTHER TO THE SOUTHWEST, ENEMY FORCES TOOK A FANK POSITION IN THE KOMPONG SOM-REAM AREA. THE REAM AIRFIELD, HOWEVER, REMAINED OPEN FOR MOST OF THE PERIOD, AND ADDITIONAL FORCES HAVE BEEN SENT FROM KOMPONG SOM TO PREVENT FURTHER DETERIORATION IN THE AREA.

16. ELSEWHERE, CONTACT BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES WAS FREQUENT AT TAKEO, PREY VENG, ON THE MEKONG EAST BANK OPPOSITE PHNOM PENH AND ALONG THE BASSAC RIVER SOUTH OF THE CAPITAL. THERE WAS NO SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN ANY OF THESE AREAS AS A RESULT OF THE FIGHTING.

17. A MEKONG CONVOY ARRIVED IN PHNOM PENH DURING THE WEEK. IT RECEIVED NUMBEROUS HITS BY 75MM, B-40 AND AUTOMATIC WEAPONS ENROUTE BUT NO VESSELS OR CARGO WERE LOST. ANOTHER CONVOY, ENCOUNTERING ONLY MINOR ENEMY OPPOSITION, TRANSITED THE TONLE SAP BETWEEN KOMPONG CHHNANG AND PHNOM PENH CARRYING MUCH NEEDED PRODUCE FOR THE CAPITAL. DEAN

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